

Heritage Statement

196 & 197 Parrock Street

Gravesend

DA12 1EW



Significance of the Asset

The building is Grade II listed and both because of its unique design and construction and because of its town centre location, the building is undoubtedly important to the character, appearance and chronicle of Gravesend. It is situated in the King Street Conservation Area opposite St John's Catholic Church. Furthermore, it is on the one way system. Unusually in the country and perhaps uniquely, in Gravesend, it has curved glass bay windows making it a landmark building to anyone familiar with the Gravesend one way system.

The Property

The property one of a pair of semi-detached houses, forms part of a row of attached properties on the west side of Parrock Street. The bay curved glass windows are mirrored in the adjoining property to the north (195 Parrock Street), accentuating their impact. The date of construction is not known.

It was converted to use as office accommodation prior to being given its grade II listing in 1975 and aside from the general layout, there is little evidence of residential use remaining. It has been vacant for five or more years and is falling into disrepair.

The property has four floors, plus basement, the layout on each floor being a front and back room leading off from the stair on the first three floors. The stairs to the top floor go between the front and back rooms.

The first floor is combined with 197 Parrock Street providing an additional front and back room, the front room currently split into two.. The staircase and door positions indicate that this was always the case with the exception of the split of the front room.

On the second floor there is a small room above the front door, perhaps built for architectural congruency..

There is a dormer window built into the loft which is not mirrored in 195 Parrock Street and is probably an addition. There is currently no access to the loft except through the ceiling hatch.

At the rear of the property, there are w.c.s off the landings between ground and first floors, and first and second floors. With a flat roof, these appear to have been an addition to the building.

The bay window continues to the basement, evidently having been bricked up and the land in front filled in.

Current Condition

The roof needs attention. Water is penetrating into the top front room and buddleia can be seen growing from the parapet. Five of the curved glass panes are missing and have been replaced with poly carbonate.

The internal condition would be serviceable for office use, subject to redecoration and attention to the roof.

The proposal

The building is currently designated as office accommodation and the proposal is to return it to residential use, with one flat on each floor.

The proposal includes removing the soil infilled in the front of the building, re-instatement of the basement window and wrought iron railings.



An independent front door will be installed at basement level: or reinstalled, it is not clear if there was an original..

The missing curved glass window panes will be replaced.

Justification for the proposed works

The building is unoccupied, and has been for at least five years. There is little or no demand for the type of office accommodation which it offers and no alternative use is apparent.

Conversion to residential flats is proposed as the best use for the building. The only identifiable alternative is a House of Multiple Occupation, which indeed might be more financially viable, but would require more extensive alterations and offer less hope of being valued and cared for. Without use the building will deteriorate and eventually fall down.

Architectural Assets

There will be no change to the existing footprint of the building or to the outside of the building except reinstatement of the basement bay window and railings as described.

As part of the conversion to offices, all of the original internal doors were with fire doors. No fireplaces remain.

Original features that do remain are the cornices on the ceilings on the ground and first floors and the stairs to the second floor. In order that these be retained, fire and sound proofing between flats will be done from above.

The sash windows will be reconditioned and retained.

The stairs to the basement will be removed.

Three alternative proposals have been submitted. One of these involves an alteration to the base of the stairs to the third floor.

Structural Work

Conversion of the building to office accommodation did not involve any structural work, and no structural work is proposed in the conversion back to residential use.

Proposals and their affect on the significance of the asset.

The proposals have been made to minimise effects to the significance of the asset.

To the exterior, the only changes will be to reinstate the front basement window, the front railings and replace the missing curved glass panes.

Internal room sizes will remain unchanged except in two rooms where bathrooms and escape passages are necessary. All of the existing internal walls will remain. Bathrooms and if necessary an escape passage will be inserted within the existing rooms.

The staircase between the ground floor and basement will be removed. It has no balustrade and does not exhibit any original features.

The main rooms on the first two floors have moulded ceilings. Fire and noise insulation will be done from the floor above to preserve them.

No fire surrounds remain in the building.

Communal Value

Since the building has no public function it has no current communal value.